Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) A method of modifying an antibiotic-producing strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* or *Streptomyces lividans* to increase antibiotic production in said strain, the method comprising functionally deleting in said strain the *scbA* gene.

2.-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) A modified strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* or *Streptomyces lividans*, the modified strain having a functional deletion of the *scbA* gene, whereby production of at least one antibiotic in said modified strain is increased compared to a wild-type strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* or *Streptomyces lividans*, respectively.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the strain is *S. coelicolor* A3(2) or *S. lividans* 66.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Original) The strain of claim 9, which is a modified strain of *S. coelicolor* A3(2) or *S. lividans* 66.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently amended) A method for identifying *Streptomyces* species in which antibiotic production is increased by ~~functionally deleting~~ the functional deletion of the *scbA* gene of *S. coelicolor* or a ~~homologue~~ homolog thereof, the method comprising functionally deleting the *scba* gene of *S. Coelicolor* or a homolog thereof in an antibiotic-producing strain of a *Streptomyces* species, the effect of said deletion on increasing said antibiotic production in said antibiotic-producing strain being unknown, said species being other than *S. virginiae*, ~~the *scbA gene of S. coelicolor or a homologue* thereof~~, culturing said strain under conditions suitable for the production of antibiotic, and determining whether

antibiotic production in said strain is increased.

16.-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the *scbA* gene or homologue thereof has a nucleotide sequence which:

~~(a) is the complement of nucleotides 2914 to 1970 of EMBL AJ007731;~~

~~(b)~~ (a) is the complement of nucleotides 2142-1199 of SEQ ID NO: 19;

~~(c)~~ (b) encodes a polypeptide having at least 35% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO: 17; and/or

~~(d)~~ (c) is capable of specific hybridisation with the amplification product obtained using the primers:

oligo1 (5'-GACCACGT(CG)CC(CG)GGCATG; SEQ ID NO: 1) and

oligo2 (5'-GTCCTG(CG)TGGCC(CG)GT(CG)AC(CG)CG(CG)AC; SEQ ID NO: 2)

~~to amplify~~ which produce said amplification product from total DNA of said species or strain.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 19, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a polypeptide having ~~the level of sequence identity is~~ at least ~~about~~ 50% sequence identity with the amino acid sequence of Fig. 10.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein ~~the level of~~ said sequence identity is at least ~~about~~ 65%.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein ~~the level of~~ said sequence identity is at least ~~about~~ 80%.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein ~~the level of~~ said sequence identity is at least ~~about~~ 95%.

24.-32. (Cancelled)